

The Library Assistant:

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EDITORIALS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Next Meeting of the Association will be held at Chiswick on April 20th, where the following programme has been arranged:—

- 2.45 p.m. Assemble at the Chiswick Public Library, Duke's Avenue, W.4. Proceed to the Chiswick Polish Factory where, after a complete tour of the factory, the visitors will be entertained to tea by the management.
- 6.30 p.m. Meeting of the Junior Section in the Children's Library, when Miss W. K. Thorne, of the St. Bride Foundation, will read a paper on "The Personal Element."
- 7.0 p.m. General meeting in the Children's Library, when Mr. P. A. Meachaen, B.A., Bethnal Green Public Library, will read a paper on "Some modern Irish dramatists." The Chair will be taken by Miss M. Gilbert, M.L.A., Borough Librarian.

In order that adequate arrangements may be made for tea, will all intending to be present please notify Miss Gilbert by 16th April.

'Bus services 27, 27a, 82, 55, and 127a, and trams on the Hammer-smith to Kew Bridge or Hampton Court route pass Duke's Avenue, which is also within easy distance of Turnham Green, or Chiswick Park Stations, on the District railway.

A Whist Drive will be held at the St. Bride Foundation Institute, Bride Lane, E.C.4, on Wednesday, April 6th, commencing at 7 p.m.

A few tickets are still available and may be obtained from Mr. R. D. H. Smith, Public Library, Richmond, who has to acknowledge gratefully the offer of prizes from Mr. G. F. Vale, Mr. F. Meaden Roberts, Miss L. Fairweather, and an anonymous donor, to supplement those offered by the Association.

The May Meeting will be held at Colchester on May 18th, as a joint meeting with the Eastern Counties Division. A full programme for the day will appear in the next number of the journal; and a very full and interesting visit has been assured by the eager co-operation of the Eastern Counties Division and the local authorities.

London members will use the 10.26 a.m. train from Liverpool Street, arriving at Colchester at 11.56. The return fare for reserved accommodation is 6s. 7d. Application for tickets should be made to Mr. R. D. H. Smith, Richmond Public Library, *not later than May 10th*, and postal orders should be made payable to him, and not crossed.

The Colchester Library Committee will entertain the Association to tea and, with regard to lunch, it is proposed to leave members to make their own arrangements. Provided, however, a sufficient number wish to avail themselves of the advantage, the "George" Hotel will provide an excellent lunch at a specially-reduced charge of 2s. 6d. a head.

Members are requested to state whether they will require lunch at the "George," when writing for their tickets, so that the necessary booking there can be made. The money for this should not be sent.

The Work of the Council. The Hon. Treasurer reported at the last meeting of the Council that the result of the appeal for Mr. Bryant, made last month in these pages, was that a total sum of £16 10s. 0d. had been donated to date. The Press and Publications Committee reported with pleasure that Mr. W. H. Parker, Borough Librarian of Hackney, had accepted their invitation to become the Honorary Editor of the new edition of "Sequels," which they hoped to have ready for publication by this time next year. The Council wished an expression of their thanks to be conveyed to Mr. Parker, for his professional zeal and enthusiasm in thus undertaking so readily the exacting task of revising the work. This publication of the Association has gone all over the world, and is still being enquired for, although it has been "O.P." for some months now. We feel sure that under Mr. Parker's editorship the revised edition will become an indispensable tool at the "Enquiry Desk."

The Next Meeting of the Council will take place on Wednesday, April 18th. The May meeting of the Council will be held at St. Bride's Institute, St. Bride Lane, Fleet Street, E.C.4, on Wednesday, May 11th, at 8 p.m.

At the Last Meeting of the Association, held at West Ham, the result of the ballot for the vacancy on the Council was declared. Mr. K. B. Hunt, B.A., F.L.A., of the Tottenham Public Libraries, was the successful candidate. Those who know Mr. Hunt will sincerely welcome him on the Council, for he combines an enviable zeal for scholarship with a very keen interest in professional matters.

The programme of the March meeting at West Ham was carried through without a hitch. Everyone who attended enjoyed the afternoon visits to the Essex Field Club Museum and to the Municipal College, and afterwards the generous refreshments which were kindly provided by our hosts.

The paper read by Mr. F. S. Engall, of Fulham, on "Some librettists of English opera," proved a delightful change from the ordinary paper on a professional subject. The subject was obviously too big for Mr. Engall to treat adequately in an hour's paper, so that his attitude was historical rather than critical. Nevertheless, the treatment was so light and suited to the subject, that the paper was thought by many of those present to be one of the best of those read this session. The introductory remarks made by the Mayor of West Ham, and by the Chairman of the Libraries Committee were appreciated by all of us, because they revealed how very strong was the local belief in the library movement. Mr. Whitwell, the Librarian, to whom much of the pleasure we gained from this enjoyable meeting was due, closed the evening with a few happy remarks.

The attendance at the meeting of the Junior Section at West Ham, was the largest since April, 1925, and it is hoped that this number (19) will be maintained and improved upon. These meetings, despite the title, are not meant to appeal only to Junior Assistants; they are meant simply as training grounds for speakers and questioners.

Mr. E. Wisker of Fulham, read a paper on "The Fiction Question," in which he looked at the subject from the point of view of the ratepayer, who thinks that because fiction appears to be used more than non-fiction, it should receive more attention from the librarian; that the demand for a book was the criterion for its possession, and that the stock should be composed of standard novels and a high proportion of popular novels. This, from the librarians' point of view, would entail the regular welding of stock which is usually insisted on in text books, but seldom in practice. The discussion which followed was very bright and unusually interesting.

Nominations for Officers and Council. Members are reminded that all nominations for Officers and Council 1927-28, should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Public Library, Bancroft Road, Mile End, London, E.1., by May 1st.

Classes in Librarianship in L.C.C. Evening Continuation Schools.—Efforts are being made to arrange classes in librarianship at one of the L.C.C. Evening Continuation Schools. All those who would like to avail themselves of the classes, were they arranged, please notify the Hon. Secretary, Public Library, Bancroft Road, Mile End, E.1.

The Southwark Borough Council are making efforts to form a special collection in the Reference Library of standard and current literature on electrical and allied subjects, in memory of Michael Faraday, who was born in the Borough, not far from the Central Library. A number of interested firms have supported the project.

Cardigan Town Council have decided to hold a special meeting to discuss the advisability of levying a rate for library purposes in the town. This is one of many similar meetings which are being convened all over the country. It looks as if the Rural Library schemes are arousing people's interest in books to no little purpose and extent. The *Cardigan Advertiser* says: "Of course the matter of finance is a very important one, but we hope the Council will not let this aspect outweigh other considerations. The welfare of the young people of the town must be set above £. s. d., and some sacrifice in this direction will undoubtedly pay in the long run." With the local press so admirably and unhesitatingly leading public opinion along the right path there can be no doubt of the successful outcome of the library movement in Cardigan.

The Northampton Library Authorities have just celebrated their Jubilee. They were fortunate enough to secure an address from Mr. St. John Ervine, and judging by the interest aroused in the local press their enterprise was well rewarded. This kind of publicity is excellent and has no doubt brought many new borrowers to the libraries in Northampton.

Mr. F. W. T. Lange, whose hospitality at Dickens House has made many lovers of Dickens his debtor, has now, owing to ill-health, been compelled to resign the post of Honorary Librarian of the collection there. We are voicing we feel sure, the feelings of every member, when we wish Mr. Lange a quick return to health.

"The outstanding characteristic of many of the novelists of the Nineties was to be as shocking as possible, although present day folk are inclined to ask what all the fuss was about." This statement was made by **Mr. Holbrook Jackson** in the course of his lecture on "**Books of the Nineties**," at Messrs. W. and G. Foyle's Bookroom on Wednesday, February 23rd.

Mr. A. J. A. Symons, of the First Edition Club, was in the chair, and, in introducing the lecturer, pointed out that Mr. Holbrook Jackson had made at least five distinct reputations in the world of letters.

The lecturer began by describing the development of the present day novel from the old three-decker type. Before the Nineties, bindings, paper, and illustrations were very poor, but a new standard was established, and there was a general tendency to improve the style and

format of books, this impulsion towards good books being greatly assisted by William Morris and Henry Walker who blazed the trail to good typography. The old discount system was also abolished, and novel writing received an impetus. A further important factor was the photo-process of engraving, which has continued to beautify literature, although the artists of the Nineties thought they foresaw in this process the doom of all things artistic.

Continuing, Mr. Jackson showed that in the Nineties every department of Literature produced masters, some of whom were with us to-day; and these had permanently affected poetry, essay, short story, novel and drama.

Naturally the lecturer spent some time dealing with the "Decadence" of the Nineties, and showed that this was but one of the recurring periods seen throughout all history, when the forces of conservatism fought against the forces making for progress. The chief exponents of this phase of the period, both on the Continent and in England, were referred to, and the influence of the women of the day, the growth of a new imperialism in literature, the revolt of the under man, were shown to be in the main, more constructive than destructive. This "Decadence" proved itself to be a demand for wider ranges, greater territory, more power and larger ideals in every way.

At the close Mr. Frank Chitham expressed the thanks of those present for the excellent and enjoyable evening.

SOME LIBRETTISTS OF ENGLISH OPERA.

By F. S. ENGALL (*Fulham Public Libraries*.)*

I think the title of this paper has given fair warning that I am making no attempt to give a literary history of English opera. Rather it is the outcome of somewhat desultory reading in this department of literature with the object of making a foundation for a more extended study of the subject. If my paper seems at times somewhat flippant, if it lacks that high seriousness that is so typical of papers usually read before assistant librarians, I must plead in extenuation that in the matter of opera the English genius has born its finest fruits in the comic rather than in the serious species, witness the immortal works of Gay, Sheridan, and Gilbert.

It was the 17th century which saw the birth of opera in England, though it was in a way foreshadowed in mediæval times by the mystery and miracle plays of Coventry, Chester, and other places. Passing to the secular drama in Tudor times, we find plays containing songs essential to the piece, particularly in the Shakespearean comedies, as

* A paper read at West Ham, 9th March, 1927.

"The Tempest," "As You Like it," "Twelfth Night," and "A Midsummer Night's Dream." In the masques performed at the courts of the early Stuarts a still nearer approach was made to opera; poetry, music, scenery, machinery, and characteristic dresses and decorations being combined in them. Then came the Civil War and the Puritan regime, and dramatic art was for a time almost eclipsed. During the Commonwealth, however, there was a strong undercurrent in favour of theatrical productions, and surreptitious performances were given whenever possible. Towards the end of the Commonwealth it is evident that popular discontent with the suppression of stage-plays was becoming very strong, for Sir William D'Avenant was authorised to arrange the production of "musical entertainments." D'Avenant's history is a strange one. In 1638 he succeeded Ben Jonson as Poet Laureate, and, as befitted his position, he sided with his royal master in the Civil War. Like other Cavalier poets he took to arms, and was three times taken prisoner, and twice escaped. The third time he would have undoubtedly lost his life, but for the intervention of no less a person than Milton, who saved him from the scaffold. It is said that when at last the Royalists triumphed, D'Avenant was able to reciprocate the great poet's kindness, and obtained his pardon. By slow degrees it would appear that D'Avenant came on friendly terms with his captors, for now comes the curious incident, already mentioned, of the one time Royalist Laureate being commissioned by the Commonwealth government to provide entertainments for the people. He made the most of this permission, probably going much further than the Protector intended, and in 1656 produced "The Siege of Rhodes," in many respects an epoch-making play, for it was virtually the first opera produced in England. It was designed on the Italian model, written in rime to be sung in recitative and aria. Besides this, it was noteworthy as being the first play to be performed in this country with moveable scenery, and was also the first in which a woman acted a part. And all this happened whilst the Puritans were in power, surely one of the most curious and ironical incidents of dramatic history! D'Avenant continued his good work, and produced two more operas, "The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru," a subject much to Cromwell's liking, and no doubt chosen intentionally, and "The Life of Sir Francis Drake." But the Puritans were evidently becoming alarmed, and Richard Cromwell began an enquiry respecting "all this play-acting." Political events, however, favoured the daring author, and before any action could be taken against him, Charles II was ascending the throne. D'Avenant was re-appointed Laureate in spite of the attacks of enemies, who accused him of having "exercised the office of Master of the Revels to Oliver the Tyrant." He died eight years later and was buried in Westminster Abbey, and over the grave of this soldier-poet-dramatist who wrote scarcely a line which is of value

for its own merit, was written, almost as if in derision, the words so aptly applied to his renowned predecessor

"O rare Sir William D'Avenant."

After the Restoration "The Siege of Rhodes," to which a second part was subsequently added, was frequently revived. In Pepys' diary, July 2, 1661, occurs the following entry:—

"Went to Sir William Davenant's opera . . . the second part of 'The Siege of Rhodes.' We stayed a very great while for the King and Queen of Bohemia; and by the breaking of a board over our heads, we had a great deal of dust fell into the ladies' necks and the men's hair, which made good sport. The King being come, the scene opened; which indeed is very fine and magnificent, and well acted."

The first approach towards opera in the Restoration period proper was in the direction of Shakespearean adaptations, when D'Avenant, Dryden, and Shadwell produced versions of "The Tempest," and "Macbeth." They were operatic in the worst sense of the word. Thunder and lightning was produced, the witches entered and left the stage flying, and the ghost descended and rose again at Macbeth's feet. Every attempt was made to lower the tragic tension and heighten the artificiality of the pieces. This matter of Shakespearean adaptation in the 17th century is, however, a subject of its own, and I cannot do more than mention it here.

An important landmark in the history of English opera was the composition in 1677 (this date is disputed, I believe) by Henry Purcell, then aged only 17, of the opera "Dido and Aeneas," the libretto being by Nahum Tate. Nahum Tate, whose very name is a delight, was another of that curious band, the Poets Laureate, and has the distinction of being, with Shadwell, Pye, and Eusden, one of the very worst. He has been described, not uncharitably, as "the author of the worst alteration of Shakespeare, the worst version of the Psalms, and the worst continuation of a great poem." The first and most serious of these charges concerns his play "The Sicilian Usurper," the fantastic title of his version of Shakespeare's "Richard II," the text of which he not only radically altered, but into it introduced many overt allusions to contemporary political events, as well as some ridiculous songs. He paid the penalty for his sins, however, for his play was suppressed as being dangerous to the public peace, after running only three nights. He also re-wrote "Lear" and "Coriolanus," to the latter of which he gave the horrific title "Ingratitude of a Commonwealth," presumably with an eye on the late administration.

It is in regard to the second charge, his translation of the Psalms, that his name lives to-day. Most people have heard of Tate and Brady's metrical version of the Psalms, though few know anything about these twin worthies. Many people, apparently, think they were two bishops, by which they libel the episcopate of the Anglican Church. Brady was presumably in orders, as he was a preacher as well as dramatist and

poet, but Tate had no connection with the Church. A few of the translations are not without merit, for example the well-known

~~As pants~~ "As pants the hart for cooling streams."
but most of it is merest doggerel. Two specimens of this must suffice.

In Ps. 105 occur the following lines :—

" In putrid floods throughout the land
The pest of frogs was bred :
From noisom fens sent up to croak
At Pharoah's board and bed."

whilst Ps. 114 informs us that :—

" The taller mountains skipp'd like rams,
The hills skipp'd after them like lambs."

People used to sing this in church.

The third charge, that Tate wrote the worst continuation of a great poem, refers to the second part of Dryden's "Absolom and Achitophel," of which the major part was apparently written by Tate. From Tate's other work it can, I think, be assumed that any parts of merit in this very unsuccessful continuation were due to the revising hand of Dryden. Tate seems to have had no preference as to themes wherewith to employ his muse, he translated Holy Scripture one day, and the next a Latin poem by Frascastoro whose title is more fitted for a medical treatise than for the realm of pure literature. From tampering with Shakespeare's masterpieces he would pass to writing a "Poem on Tea," one of his best works, by the way. After lauding the Stuarts, he enthusiastically welcomed William of Orange, grew rhapsodical over Mary and Anne, and heralded the arrival of George I, who, however, according to Johnson, deprived him of his Laureateship. This unfortunate literary Vicar of Bray ended his life soon afterwards, a bankrupt.

To return to Purcell. "Dido and Aeneas" was written on the Italian model, to be sung in recitative and aria, but Purcell was in advance of his times and did not repeat the experiment, for English taste at the time preferred the native form of opera, spoken dialogue interspersed with songs, a form derived directly from the Masque. His next nearest approach to real opera was in Dryden's "King Arthur," a piece which gained a tumult of praise which it well deserved. Earlier, Dryden had written "Albian and Albanus," something between a masque and an opera, with music by a French favourite of Charles II. It was planned as a vast piece of royal flattery, and although of some merit was a failure on the stage owing to political disturbances. Planned originally as a kind of symbolic history of the reign of Charles, it was just about to be performed publicly when Charles died. It was then enlarged so as to embrace Albanus, who is James. In its new form it was promising a lengthy run, when on the sixth night news came of the landing of Monmouth. Hurriedly the ill-fated thing was laid aside.

Contemporary with Dryden was Elkanah Settle. His opera, "The Fairy Queen," with music by Purcell, in some ways foreshadowed modern pantomime. Derived directly from "A Midsummer Night's Dream," it was so altered in scene and words as to be completely transformed. Included in it were "Chinese dances," in which, among many other things, were introduced six monkeys. "The World in the Moon," by the same author, was a curious production, in which there was a premonition of comic opera. Contemporaries, including the author himself, seem to have been at a loss where to classify the play. We find it called "an opera," "a comedy," "a comic opera," and a "dramatic comic opera." In reality it seems to have been a huge spectacular performance with comic relief.

Elkanah Settle was, I am afraid, as bad a turncoat as Nahum Tate, and though not Poet Laureate, he held for a time the post of City Poet, the chief duty of which was to produce the annual pageants on Lord Mayor's day, a task for which he was well fitted. Like Tate also, he was the author of poetry which matched the queerness of his name. He first came into prominence through the agency of Rochester, who boomed him for all he was worth, and imposed him on the Court as a means of humiliating Dryden. At the time it was keenly discussed, both in town and at the universities, which of the two was the greater genius, the under-graduates inclining to give the palm to Settle, a circumstance which can no doubt be paralleled to-day and indeed at any period. Dryden revenged himself on his rival in the second part of "Absolom and Achitophel," where Settle is described as:—

"Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
And in one word, heroically mad."

After a time, however, Rochester and the Court grew weary of the uninspired versifier, who thereupon made overtures to the opposition, and testified to his Protestantism (the Court was, of course, inclining to Romanism under the later Stuarts) by writing two scurrilous plays "The Female Prelate, being the history of Pope Joan," and "The Character of a Popish successor." In his capacity of City Poet also he devised the pageant of "The Burning of the Pope," on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's birthday. Events making him think he was on the losing side, however, he promptly recanted, and wrote an exposure of Titus Oates and his alleged confederates. But he had backed the wrong horse, and when James II was deposed he recommenced overtures to the Whigs. He was by now quite discredited, and falling on bad times was reduced to letting himself out to write love letters for maid servants. He died a poor brother in the Charterhouse.

We have now come to the first decade of the 18th century, when the Italian opera began slowly to gain a footing in England, and to oust native drama. At first, foreign opera was introduced in the form of English adaptations of Italian and other works. By 1708 a movement was being made towards the introduction of opera entirely sung in

Italian. Even now some of the singers took their parts in that language, and were answered by others in English. The first entirely Italian opera was produced in 1710 and was a complete success, the music being by Buononcini, and within another year the appearance of Handel with his work "Rinaldo" gave the *coup de grâce* to expiring English opera, and placed the stage in alien hands. It is amusing to recall that in those days Buononcini and Handel were considered rivals of almost equal merit, though in some obscure way party politics entered into the rivalry, the Whigs espousing the cause of Handel and the Tories that of Buononcini. An epigram, which was afterwards set as a "cheerful glee for four voices," appeared in "The Spectator," apparently from the pen of one John Byrom, though they are sometimes attributed to Swift:—

"Some say, compar'd to Buononcini,
That Mynheer Handel's but a ninny;
Others aver, that he to Handel
Is scarcely fit to hold a Candle.
Strange all this difference should be
"Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee."

Handel retains his position on the musical Olympus, his rival now lives only in musical histories.

The regular dramatists and actors were, not unnaturally, jealous of this successful invasion, and satire of the Italian singers appears everywhere in Augustan literature, from "The Spectator," and "The Dunciad" to the full-fledged farcical burlesques performed in the play-houses. The following is typical of the attacks which appeared in print:

"From foreign insult save the English stage,
No more th' Italian squalling tribe admit
In tongues unknown; 'tis Popery in wit."

This satire of the "tongues unknown" is a common one. "And pray what are your town diversions?" asks Baker in "Tunbridge Walks." "To hear a parcel of Italian eunuchs, like so many cats, squawl out somewhat you don't understand."

During the next twenty years many attempts were made to win men's fancy from the Italian opera, by writing operas after the English style, and also after the Italian manner. They were dismal failures, and the Italian opera proceeded on its path of glory almost unchecked. In 1728, however, occurred an epoch-making event, no less than the production of Gay's "Beggar's Opera," the first and the most perfect specimen of the type known as the Ballad Opera.

This famous piece was said to be the result of a remark made by Swift eleven years earlier: "What an odd pretty sort of thing a Newgate Pastoral would make"; by the irony of chance it was produced when Swift had fled to Ireland to join his dying Stella. Before it was produced its chance of success was considered very doubtful. Congreve,

after reading it over said "it would either take greatly or be damned confoundedly," whilst Pope wrote to Swift, "Whether it succeeds or not, it will make a great noise, but whether of claps or hisses I know not." Colley Cibber refused it for Drury Lane Theatre, and when accepted by John Rich, Quin had such a poor opinion of it, that he refused the part of Captain Macheath. At the first performance the fate of the opera hung for some time in the balance, which is, I think, quite understandable, for the first act is undoubtedly the weakest, but by its finish it had captured the public taste, and thereafter ran for no less than sixty-two nights, a startling record at a time when it was quite usual for plays to be changed nightly.

It is interesting to note that the words of the song "When you Censure the Age, Be Cautious and sage," were written by Dean Swift, and the words of "The Modes of the Court so Common have grown," by Lord Chesterfield. All the other songs, with three exceptions, were by Gay. The music of the song "Let us take the road, Hark, I hear the sound of coaches," was by Handel, being the march in his opera "Rinaldo," produced seventeen years earlier. The famous song "Lillibullero," to Lord Chesterfield's words already mentioned, is sometimes ascribed to Purcell, though perhaps only adapted by him from an old Irish melody. "Lillibullero" is described by Bishop Burnet as "a foolish ballad treating the Papists, and chiefly the Irish, in a very ridiculous manner, that made an impression on the army that cannot be imagined by those that saw it not." The Viceroy "boasted that the song had sung a deluded Prince (namely James II) out of the three kingdoms." To-day the tune still fascinates, though the words are unintelligible.

Though at the present time the satire interspersed amongst the charming ballads can only be appreciated in a general sense, it was well-known then to be directed against Sir Horace Walpole and his friends, who were caricatured in the persons of Peachum, Lockit, and the other graceless rogues who adorn the piece. Not only did the play make, as the wits of the day said, "Rich gay, and Gay rich," but it also procured the leading actress a title, for Lavinia Fenton, the first Polly Peachum, quite captured the heart of the Duke of Bolton. Unfortunately, there was already a Duchess of Bolton, though her health was ailing. Undeterred by this fact, however, the Duke set out on a continental tour, accompanied by Miss Fenton—and his private chaplain. In the course of their travellings came the glad news of the decease of the unwanted Duchess, whereupon the chaplain showed that he had always been on the side of the angels by uniting the Duke and the actress in Holy Matrimony.

The triumph of "The Beggar's Opera," was so instantaneous and overwhelming as seriously to affect the success of Handel's Italian enterprise at the Haymarket Theatre, which was indeed ultimately ruined, and English drama obtained a new lease of life.

One cannot but regard this struggle between the Italian and the Ballad Opera with mixed feelings. Undoubtedly the former is the higher form of art, but in those days the theatre-going public was so small that it was impossible for foreign opera and English drama to thrive together. When the Italian opera, aided by the genius of Handel, had fairly established itself, English drama was extinguished, and attempts to place it on the stage meant bankruptcy. It is impossible then, not to rejoice in the success of "The Beggar's Opera," for that meant a renaissance of native dramatic art; unfortunately it meant the death, as far as this country was concerned, of grand opera. For this reason we find dramatic historians siding with Gay, and historians of music siding with Handel. Whether there was bitterness between the two at the time I do not know, but it is not uncommon to find musical people at the present time who have no liking for Gay or any of his works. The following are extracts from a life of Handel published twenty-five years ago in the "Master Musicians" series.

"In 1727 a work by Gay, called "The Beggar's Opera," had been produced. It was low, vulgar, and indecent, and therefore proved irresistible to the fashionable society of the day. The thing continued for more than a century to please the public."

Later on, referring to the departure of the Italian company from England in 1737, the same writer says: "London was left with its 'Beggar's Opera,' 'Polly,' and similar immoral trash, for which it had shown so strong a predilection."

For myself, I can only rejoice that I live in an age when it is possible to see and hear (at a price, it is true), the best of foreign opera and English drama, without the thought that they are mutually cutting each other's throats.

Gay at once conceived the idea of following up his triumph, and wrote a sequel called "Polly." The Lord Chamberlain, however, was prepared, and its performance was banned. The prohibition being largely an affair of party, a battle royal ensued. There was no censorship of books, so it was decided to publish it by subscription. The Opposition rallied to the author to a man, the Duchess of Queensberry "touting" for him everywhere, even at court. So pressing was she that it was impossible to ignore her conduct, and she was requested to absent herself from Court, whereupon she wrote the following letter to George II.

"The Duchess of Queensberry is surprised and well pleased that the King hath given her so agreeable a command as to stay from Court, where she never came for diversion, but to bestow a great civility on the King and Queen; she hopes by such an unprecedented order as this is, that the King will see as few as he wishes at his Court, particularly such as are to think or speak truth."

There is a good deal more in the same strain, and of course, it created an immense sensation at the time. However, the net result

was that "Polly" in book form brought Gay twice as much money as had its predecessor. He did not enjoy his wealth for long, however, for he died a year or two later, and was buried in Westminster Abbey "as if he had been a peer of the realm." His tomb bears, in addition to an epitaph by Pope, his own mocking lines :—

"Life is a jest, and all things show it,
I thought so once, and now I know it."

Three years after the production of "The Beggar's Opera" a piece was produced at the Haymarket Theatre which is of considerable interest, for the music was by Handel and the words by Gay. This was the opera "Acis and Galatea," the story being adapted from Ovid's "Metamorphoses." Really, however, it belongs to the Italian period, for words and music were ready ten years before it was performed. Gay's only other operatic attempt, produced after his death, was a kind of farce, called "Achilles," which seems partly a burlesque of the classical story, and partly a satire of political and personal application.

Immediately after the success of "The Beggar's Opera," a number of writers hurried to pen plays on a similar line. But I have already spent too much time over the Ballad Operas, and must press on. Running side by side with the Ballad Operas and indeed frequently indistinguishable from them, were the Burlesque operas. Two of the principle writers of these were Henry Carey and Henry Fielding. The former's "Dragon of Wantley" is one of the best, and still makes amusing reading. A parody of Handel's "Goustino," set to music by Lampe, Handel's bassoon player, it ran for over eleven weeks, four more nights than "The Beggar's Opera," while the libretto went into fourteen editions in one year.

"The Dragon of Wantley" was produced in 1737, and in the 1740's and 50's nothing of importance appeared. In the 1760's, however, we find a new type of dramatic art arising, the Comic Opera, a type which culminated in Sheridan's "Duenna," which in 1775 rivalled the popularity of Gay's triumph of 1728. In my opinion it well deserved its triumph, for both words and music are a delight, but when produced recently at Hammersmith it apparently failed to catch popular opinion, and was withdrawn after quite a short run, to my great regret. The Duenna herself is a delightful creature, and her bickerings with Don Jerome most amusing, as for example the following :—

DUENNA : I delight in the tender passions, and would befriend
all under their influence.

DON JEROME : The tender passions, indeed. Go, thou wanton sybil,
thou amorous woman of Endor, go.

It contained a rather scurrilous attack on monasteries, some of which was cut out in the Hammersmith production. When Isaac the Jew meets Father Paul, he comments on his rosy complexion.

One cannot but regard this struggle between the Italian and the Ballad Opera with mixed feelings. Undoubtedly the former is the higher form of art, but in those days the theatre-going public was so small that it was impossible for foreign opera and English drama to thrive together. When the Italian opera, aided by the genius of Handel, had fairly established itself, English drama was extinguished, and attempts to place it on the stage meant bankruptcy. It is impossible then, not to rejoice in the success of "The Beggar's Opera," for that meant a renaissance of native dramatic art; unfortunately it meant the death, as far as this country was concerned, of grand opera. For this reason we find dramatic historians siding with Gay, and historians of music siding with Handel. Whether there was bitterness between the two at the time I do not know, but it is not uncommon to find musical people at the present time who have no liking for Gay or any of his works. The following are extracts from a life of Handel published twenty-five years ago in the "Master Musicians" series.

"In 1727 a work by Gay, called "The Beggar's Opera," had been produced. It was low, vulgar, and indecent, and therefore proved irresistible to the fashionable society of the day. The thing continued for more than a century to please the public."

Later on, referring to the departure of the Italian company from England in 1737, the same writer says: "London was left with its 'Beggar's Opera,' 'Polly,' and similar immoral trash, for which it had shown so strong a predilection."

For myself, I can only rejoice that I live in an age when it is possible to see and hear (at a price, it is true), the best of foreign opera and English drama, without the thought that they are mutually cutting each other's throats.

Gay at once conceived the idea of following up his triumph, and wrote a sequel called "Polly." The Lord Chamberlain, however, was prepared, and its performance was banned. The prohibition being largely an affair of party, a battle royal ensued. There was no censorship of books, so it was decided to publish it by subscription. The Opposition rallied to the author to a man, the Duchess of Queensberry "touting" for him everywhere, even at court. So pressing was she that it was impossible to ignore her conduct, and she was requested to absent herself from Court, whereupon she wrote the following letter to George II.

"The Duchess of Queensberry is surprised and well pleased that the King hath given her so agreeable a command as to stay from Court, where she never came for diversion, but to bestow a great civility on the King and Queen; she hopes by such an unprecedented order as this is, that the King will see as few as he wishes at his Court, particularly such as are to think or speak truth."

There is a good deal more in the same strain, and of course, it created an immense sensation at the time. However, the net result

was that "Polly" in book form brought Gay twice as much money as had its predecessor. He did not enjoy his wealth for long, however, for he died a year or two later, and was buried in Westminster Abbey "as if he had been a peer of the realm." His tomb bears, in addition to an epitaph by Pope, his own mocking lines :—

"Life is a jest, and all things show it,
I thought so once, and now I know it."

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Father Paul explains this phenomenon by saying: "Yes, I have blushed for mankind until the hue of my shame is as fixed as their vices. Yet they continue to sin under my very nose." Isaac replies: "Efects, Father, I should have guessed as much, for your nose seems to be put to the blush more than any other part of your face."

Apart from Sheridan, the two principle writers of Comic Opera towards the end of the 18th century were Charles Dibdin and Isaac Bickerstaffe, the latter not to be confused with the imaginary person of that name used by both Swift and Steele as a cloak of anonymity. Dibdin and Bickerstaffe must be considered together, since Dibdin, besides being both author and composer of many operas, supplied the music for several of Bickerstaffe's plays. Dibdin showed musical ability at an early age, his Pastoral Opera, "The Shepherd's Artifice," of which he wrote both the words and the music, being produced when he was 17 years old. As an actor he made a great hit in the part of Mungo, the black servant in Bickerstaffe's opera "The Padlock," of which more anon. A few years later he composed the major part of the music of Bickerstaffe's "Lionel and Clarissa," and there followed a long series of dramatic works, in which Dibdin proved himself a very Jack-of-all-trades, ready to act as librettist, or composer, or actor, or singer, or accompanist, or general manager. He also started the "Table Entertainments," for which he composed the famous nautical songs for which he was pensioned by government. The nautical ballads have dropped one by one into oblivion, and one alone, "Tom Bowling," remains. His operas and other dramatic pieces number between 70 and 80, of most of which he was author as well as composer, and in addition he wrote the words and music of over 1,000 songs. But his literary exuberance did not stop even here, for towards the end of his life he published his "Professional Life" in four volumes, a work dreary and egotistical in the extreme, and is also credited with "A History of the Stage," in five volumes. It was not only in literature, however, that he was prolific, for he left behind him several families, the products of irregular unions. His eldest son was named Charles Isaac Mungo, the three names commemorating respectively Dibdin himself, Bickerstaffe, and the blackamoor in the "Padlock." This son, usually known as Charles Dibdin the younger, wrote a successful comic opera "The Farmer's Wife," produced in 1814. It has nothing to do with a farmer seeking a wife, the subject being a town gallant seeking to debauch a farmer's wife, without success, however.

Isaac Bickerstaffe, Dibdin's contemporary, was of Irish extraction. Unlike Dibdin he was an author and not a composer. Two of his most successful comic operas were "The Maid of the Mill," based on Richardson's "Pamela," and "Love in a Village," for the plot of which he was partly indebted to Wycherly's "Gentleman Dancing Master." "The Maid of the Mill" contains some pure Richardsonsese, witness the following. Lord Aimworth has at last decided to marry

the miller's daughter. He announces his decision in these words : "On mature consideration, I can see no reproach justly merited by raising a deserving woman to a station she is capable of adorning, let her birth be what it will."

From "Love in a Village" we find that the modern girl was just as much a trial in those days as she is now to Dean Inge. In the following the older woman is reproving the younger for her behaviour : "I never looked into a book but when I said my prayers, whereas *you* are always at your studies. Ah, I never knew a woman to come to good that was fond of reading." I am afraid some of our librarianesses will come to a bad end. This opera also contains the song, "We all love a pretty girl—under the rose."

Between 1760 and 1771 Bickerstaffe produced a score of pieces for the stage, and was proclaimed by Mrs. Inchbald as a worthy successor to Gay. "The Padlock," already mentioned, is noteworthy for the part of the blackamoor, whose verbal inaccuracies are reminiscent of Mrs. Malaprop, for example the following : "Curse him imperance, and him dam insurance," a phrase which might have been used in 1911 when Mr. Lloyd George started the country licking stamps. "Lionel and Clarissa" was his best opera, and was revived successfully at Hammersmith recently, though no mention was made of the author's name on the programme or elsewhere, all that was said being "music by Dibdin." Whilst he was engaged in writing for the stage he enjoyed the society of the most famous men of the time, and in Boswell we find him dining at Boswell's lodgings with Johnson, Reynolds, Garrick, Goldsmith and two others. When in the heyday of his success, however, he was suddenly plunged into the depths, for in 1772, when about 37 years old, he was suspected of a capital crime, and fled abroad. There he lived in great misery, and though he was known to be still alive in 1812, the time and place of his death are not recorded.

We have now reached the early 19th century, one of the deadliest periods in the history of the English stage, a period from which two typical operas still survive in modern repertoires, "The Bohemian Girl," and "Maritana." Balfe's "Bohemian Girl" has, of course, no connection with Puccini's finer opera "La Bohème," for the former is concerned with the country of Bohemia, the latter with artist life in Paris. Of Balfe's opera, Mr. Streatfeild, in his interesting book on opera, says : "The plot is transcendently foolish, and the words are a shining example of the immortal balderdash of the poet Bunn." Personally, I do not altogether agree with Mr. Streatfeild, I think the word "immortal" is an exaggeration. The libretto was concocted by Bunn from a ballet, the subject of which was taken from Cervantes' novel, "Preciosa." The opera was at once an immense success, it ran for more than four months, and was translated into German, Italian, French, and indeed almost every European language. It contains the

well-known song, "I dreamed I dwelt in marble halls," which always makes me think of Joseph Lyons' Corner Houses. The "Bohemian Girl" was later burlesqued by W. S. Gilbert in his "Merry Zingara."

Alfred Bunn was born about 1796. His principal work in life was that of theatrical manager, with the writing of opera libretti and poetry as side-lines. In 1883 he undertook the joint management of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, but this arduous experiment resulted in failure, and his book "The Stage before and behind the curtain" is a species of apologia for his management. In an attempt to establish English Opera, he brought out the principal works of Balfe, "The Siege of Rochelle," "The Maid of Artois," "The Bohemian Girl," "The Bondman," and "The Maid of Honour." The libretti of most of these operas were by Bunn, usually being but little more than translations from the French. That of "The Maid of Artois," is described by the Dictionary of National Biography as being "the first of those astonishing farragoes of balderdash which raised the Drury Lane manager to the first rank among poetasters."

"Poet Bunn," as he was called in derision, was constantly being ridiculed; especially by Punch. He retorted with a brochure called "A Word with Punch," in which Jerrold was referred to as "Wrong-head," Gilbert & Beckett as "Sleekhead," and Mark Lemon as "Thick-head." It was brought out to resemble a number of Punch, and was a great success, and to-day it is somewhat sought after as a bibliographical rarity.

Balfe's opera, "The Siege of Rochelle" was written by Edward Fitzball. Fitzball, who was also the author of Wallace's "Maritana," was the writer of a prodigious number of dramas and melodramas, which met with much success when first produced, though of no permanent value. A typical melodrama by Fitzball was "Jonathan Bradford, or the Murder at the Roadside Inn," the source of hundreds of others similar. His name is almost forgotten now. He was also a versifier, and is said once to have described himself as a lyric poet. He manufactured songs innumerable, patriotic, sentimental, and comic, good, bad, and indifferent. "My pretty Jane," is the best known of these. His father was a farmer, plain Mr. Ball, and no doubt the addition of Fitz helped him in some degree to success. It is said that when Wallace was introduced to Fitzball the latter was then putting the finishing touches to "Maritana." Wallace said he was thinking of writing an opera and was in need of a libretto, and Fitzball immediately handed the manuscript to his new acquaintance, and "Maritana," the opera, was the result.

We must not think too hardly of "The Bohemian Girl," and "Maritana." They may not be of much artistic merit, but they have no doubt introduced many hundreds to the musical drama, to whom it would otherwise have remained a sealed book.

(To be continued.)

OUR LIBRARY.

The Uses of Libraries. Edited by Ernest A. Baker. University of London Press. viii. + 318 pp. index. 10s. 6d. net.

The exterior and the physical form of a book undoubtedly decide in many cases whether or not a reader shall venture to explore its interior. This book, as one would expect of a product of the University of London Press, is physically attractive. It is bound tastefully, but not, we fear, too strongly, in red cloth; it is printed in beautifully clear type (of which a few letters in the first pages seem to have been robbed of their fair amount of ink), and has pleasant wide margins.

The matter of the book is as pleasing as its appearance. The initial object of the course of lectures on which it is based was to parade before the students of University College the vast resources, not only of their college library, the third largest in London, but also of the principal libraries, firstly of London, then of England, and finally of the world. Beyond this "The ultimate aim was to give . . . directions as to obtaining admission, borrowing privileges where these exist, hours of opening, and other details, with advice upon the best methods of using them (the libraries), lists of available handbooks, bibliographical guides, and the like." Each lecture was delivered by an authority on the subject, and the resulting symposium is therefore a creditable contribution to library science, and one which should do good work for the profession among the general public.

The editor sponsors the book with two introductory chapters upon "The Uses of Libraries," and "On the way to use a library, and how to read." He has written them admirably, in a quietly humorous vein and he breaks a lance in our favour both with our readers and with the booksellers. Urging the former to understand their libraries he says that "A library is a machine that requires a certain amount of skill to handle, if you are to elicit the best results," and that cataloguing and classification are the levers that set the machine working. Referring to book buying he remarks "It is a well known fallacy that libraries are the enemies of booksellers; . . . It is libraries that have implanted the reading habit."

The two chapters upon the British Museum by Mr. Esdaile and Mr. Barwick respectively, are replete with useful information, that in the former concerning the interesting history of the various collections, that in the latter concerning dodges for avoiding useless and wasteful toil when engaged upon research work.

The chapter by Mr. Gomme on "Scientific and technical libraries" emphasizes the inferiority of English libraries of this type, and is of great importance in view of modern developments.

"The Public Record Office" by Mr. Jenkinson, and "Collections and manuscripts" by Mr. Flower, are chiefly of interest to the research student.

We are all pleased and thankful, however, to learn of the preservation of the lovely poem:—

"He came all so stille
Where his mother lay
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the spray."

which "survives only in one scrubby little MS."

The library resources of London are dealt with by Mr. Sanderson, who gives us a new definition of buttered toast as "that splendid illuminator of books"; library resources outside London are dealt with in a clear, methodical manner by Mr. Sayers; and library resources outside Britain are briefly summarized by Professor Richardson. The names of these three librarians are sufficiently known to vouch for the practical value of their contributions.

We have saved until now our comment on Mr. Newcombe's "University Libraries" because the chapter seems to us to illustrate the one weakness of this excellent book, its lack of practical detail. Mr. Newcombe has given a long list of college libraries—without any addresses. Who knows offhand where to find Regent's Park College, Royal College of Music, East London College? One must turn to some other directory or to Mr. Newcombe's "The University and College Libraries of Great Britain, and Ireland," which, the editor informs us, is in the press! "Lack of space," says Mr. Newcombe, "has necessitated the exclusion of more detailed information." Surely, the employment of smaller type for the heading would have permitted the insertion of an address under each college. In a similar way both Mr. Esdaile and Mr. Barwick omitted any mention of "hours of opening, and other details," from their chapters on the British Museum, and since the editor has not seen fit to supply them in a note or an appendix, we are again forced to rely upon some other guide.

The book is undoubtedly an excellent conspectus of the library resources of the world, but we think that it has just failed to achieve the editor's "ultimate aim."

P. A. M.

RECEIVED.

The Library Journal, Feb. 15th-March 1st. Contains a useful classified list of one hundred legal novels.

Coventry Public Libraries: Readers' Bulletin, March-April, 1927. Edited by L. A. Beasley (of the Libraries' staff).

Grand Rapids Public Library, West Side Branch. Dedication booklet. (Contains many illustrations of the various departments).

Readers' Ink: Indianapolis Library Service. Feb., 1927.

Tapley-Soper (H.). Twelfth report on manuscripts and records existing in, or relating to, Devonshire.

Argentine Republic. Academia Nacional de Ciencias. El crecimiento de las grandes bibliotecas de la tierra. A useful survey of the principal libraries of the world.

Halifax Readers' Guide, March, 1927.

W. and G. Foyle. Catalogue of Archæology and Genealogy. (Secondhand and New books.)

The following chapters of the American Library Association's Manual of Library economy have recently been added to the stock of the A. A. L. Library housed at Islington:—

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|---------------|---|
| 1. Bolton. | American library history. |
| 2. Bishop. | Library of Congress. |
| 3. Wyer. | The State library. |
| 4. Wyer. | The College and university library. |
| 5. Bolton. | Proprietary and subscription libraries. |
| 6. Lord. | The Free library. |
| 8. Johnston. | Special libraries. |
| 9. Yust. | Library legislation. |
| 10. Eastman. | The Library building. |
| 12. Bostwick. | Administration of a public library. |
| 13. Plummer. | Training for librarianship. |
| 15. Eastman. | Branch libraries. |
| 16. Bascom. | Book selection. |
| 17. Hopper. | Order and accession department. |
| 18. Bacon. | Classification. |
| 20. Rathbone. | Shelf department. |
| 21. Vitz. | Circulation work. |

23. Wyer. U.S. government documents.
 25. Pamphlets and minor library material.
 27. Wynkoop. Commissions, state and state agencies.
 29. Hunt. Library work with children.
 30. Chamberlain. Library work with the blind.
 32. Walter. Library printing.

Application for the loan of any of these should be made to the Hon. Librarian of the Association, Central library, Islington, N.7.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

Bell (Ernest). Fair treatment for animals. (Bell, 2s. 6d.)
 Children's Librarians will find this book of great use to them in answering enquiries in connection with the R.S.P.C.A. competitions.

Fitzrandolph (H. E.). and M. D. Hay. The Rural industries of England and Wales. 2 vols. (O. U. P., 5s. each)
 A most valuable book, unique in its scope and treatment.

Haviland (Maud). Forest, steppe and tundra: studies in animal environment. (C. U. P., 12s. 6d.)

"There is only one fault in this admirable book—that it will not be read enough. It will probably be missed by vast numbers of unlearned nature-lovers who would have enjoyed every page of it."—*New Statesman*.

Maitland (F. W.) Equity, also forms of action at common law.

(C. U. P., 16s.)

Muller (J. A.) Stephen Gardiner and the Tudor reaction.

(S. P. C. K., 15s.)

Extraordinary as it seems, it is yet true, that this is the first biography of one of the most famous lawyer-statesmen, diplomat-churchmen of the Tudor period.

Murdoch (James). A History of Japan, 3 vols. (Kegan Paul, 15s.)

"There they stand, three noble volumes, the life-work of a remarkable intellect. *The History of Japan* . . . constitutes one of the finest accounts of the development of an oriental people ever produced by Western scholarship."—*New Statesman*, June 19th, 1926.

Nathan (George J.). The Autobiography of an attitude.

(Knopf, 8s. 6d.)

Clever, epigrammatic notes of an American intellectual. Apart from being very amusing, they reveal a side of American life which is usually ignored. They show the effect of modern America, with its deification of commercial success and individualism, on the mind of one who has little in common with the inhabitants of Main Street. Few will deny that it is refreshing to find an American who dislikes "the pictures" so much that he has been able to coin the expressive name "cinema sinks" for picturedromes.

Owst (G. R.) Preaching in mediæval England. (C. U. P., 17s. 6d.)

Pfuhl (Ernst). Masterpieces of Greek drawing and painting. Trans. by J. D. Beazley. (Chatto and Windus, 30s.)

Prunières (Henry). Monteverdi: his life and work. Trans. by M. D. Mackie. (Dent, 10s. 6d.)

A fair critical estimate of the work of a much-neglected musician. There is nothing in English of this scope on Monteverdi, so that the volume is very welcome to musicians who have formerly had to rely solely on stray articles for information on this composer.

Robertson (J. M.) The Problem of Shakespeare's sonnets.

(Routledge, 15s.)

Saenz (Moises), and H. I. Priestley. Some Mexican problems.

(C. U. P., 10s.)

A good introduction to the problems of modern Mexico.

Salter (F. R.). Editor. Some early tracts on poor relief. Pref. by Sidney Webb.

(Methuen, 5s.)

Contains, amongst other important documents, a translation into English (for the first time) of Vives' *De Subventionne Pauperum*.

Seeböhm (Frederic). The English village community.

(C. U. P., 10s. 6d.)

A new edition of a standard work on early economic history, first published in 1883.

Smyth (C. H.). Cranmer and the Reformation under Edward VI.

(C. U. P., 10s. 6d.)

"One of the very few books of the last half century which have made a real addition to our knowledge of the Anglican Reformation."—*T. L. S.*

Warlock (Peter). The English ayre.

(O. U. P., 3s. 6d.)

Westermarck (Edward). A short history of marriage.

(Macmillan, 10s. 6d.)

Yeats (W. B.). Autobiographies.

(Macmillan, 10s. 6d.)

Contains work which has hitherto been obtainable only in expensive limited editions.

The real "book of the month" is, of course, Lawrence's *Revolt in the Desert*. The Cape edition is well-produced, and has already gone into several impressions.

F. S. S.

THE DIVISIONS.

YORKSHIRE DIVISION.

The Annual Meeting of the Division was held at Sheffield on Wednesday, March 9th. About 65 members from various parts of Yorkshire assembled at the Central Public Library, Sheffield, at 3 p.m.

Motor buses were provided, in which members were conveyed to the newly-organised branch libraries at Bungeave and Attercliffe. The Attercliffe Branch Library had only been opened on the previous day, and here the members were able to examine and admire the last word in modern branch library organisation and equipment.

At 5 p.m. the members were entertained to tea at the Town Hall by the Lord Mayor (Alderman J. C. Graves). Welcoming the members, the Lord Mayor spoke of the great benefits of the modern library system. He said they were not specially proud of their buildings in Sheffield. There might be buildings worse than their central libraries, but if so, he did not know where they were. Thanks to the enlightened management of recent years, however, the central libraries were now quite presentable from a utilitarian point of view. He would like to ask to what extent a magnificent central library was a desirable acquisition, under the conditions of to-day. There were at least two opinions as to whether they ought not to be spending whatever money they had in reconstructing and multiplying their branch libraries, or whether they ought to aim at a lavish expense in putting up what would architecturally be considered a worthy and inspiring building in the centre of the city.

Replying to the Lord Mayor, Mr. G. W. Strother, the retiring president, said some of them remembered Sheffield libraries in their old days, and were able to appreciate what has been done since the new regime started.

The Annual Business Meeting was held in the Council Chamber at 5.45

p.m. The Honorary Secretary's Annual Report along with the Honorary Treasurer's Financial Statement, were submitted and approved, after which the election of Officers and Committee for the year 1927 was announced as follows :—

President : Mr. F. Haigh (Halifax).

Vice-Presidents : Miss E. F. Wragg (Wakefield), Mr. G. W. Strother (Leeds).

Hon. Treasurer : Mr. W. Proctor (Leeds).

Hon. Secretary : Mr. G. P. Jackson (Leeds).

Committee : Miss H. Brown (Leeds), Miss M. Heap (Keighley), Miss W. K. Mather (Bradford), Miss M. V. Walker (Huddersfield), Mr. A. Finney (York), Mr. S. A. Firth (Sheffield), Mr. H. V. Marr (Sheffield), Mr. T. W. Muskett (Huddersfield); Mr. R. W. Parsons (Bradford), Mr. J. R. Rasmuss (Bradford), Mr. E. Robertshaw (Bradford), Mr. N. Treiving (Leeds).

Mr. J. P. Lamb, Chief Librarian elect of Sheffield) was next called upon to read his paper entitled "Suggestions to a New Outlook." Mr. Lamb said "That the history of librarianship in this country did not provide an exhilarating spectacle, except perhaps in the recent haste to adopt ideas developed in the freer library atmosphere of the United States. It was a curious thing that, although the responsibilities of librarianship had been greatly increased and the functions of public libraries immensely widened, certain aspects of library service had remained unchanged since their first establishment. In the selection of books, for example, the public library had clung to standards which bore little relation to the social changes of the last half-century.

What was the task before the libraries to-day? They could see the great majority of the people turned out of the primary schools at the early age of fourteen years, crammed with elementary knowledge crying aloud for expansion. They could see various educational activities attempting to enlarge the mental equipment of that mass. They could see the public libraries, aloof from formal education, attracting the more active minds to books. But what of the great majority? What of the mental inertia of what Wells called "the eating, sleeping, and breeding crowd"? It was the existence of that disturbing element that sounded a clear call to library endeavour.

They were familiar with the aversion of readers to any attempt at directing their reading; to the clear hostility of large numbers of people to any form of conscious educational effort. If that were so marked a feature of the 15 per cent. of the population who were regular users of the libraries, how much truer must it be of the remaining 85 per cent. who showed their contempt for mental improvement by refusing to avail themselves of the unforced service that the public libraries offered? If the libraries could not attract, formal education would as surely fail to do so, but the public libraries clearly offered the more effective basis for an attempt to leaven the mental ignorance of the mass.

What might well be called the reference library tradition had exercised a deplorable influence on public library expansion. Could they be satisfied that the money and energy spent on the formation and maintenance of a large public reference library was justified? Many of the larger cities maintained reference libraries at a cost grossly disproportionate to their value, and those monuments were administered at the expense of the starvation of the more active lending libraries. It was the lending library which was going to carry books, and with books, knowledge, into the homes of the 85 per cent. unread.

Mr. Lamb suggested that what was really needed in a large library system was a reserve pool, not of popular books, but of classic and semi-classic works of limited demand, from which the whole system of lending libraries could draw. They could conserve the library energy of the large cities, which were duplicating amongst themselves vast ranges of books which remained largely on the store shelves, creating problems of storage, cleanliness, and maintenance. The large reference libraries could with advantage present their surplus stocks

to a national loan library, and share not only the books but the cost of maintenance.

A hearty discussion followed Mr. Lamb's original and inspiring address in which several members commended or criticised Mr. Lamb's outlook.

Hearty votes of thanks to Mr. Gordon, Mr. Lamb, The Lord Mayor, and the Sheffield Public Libraries Committee, brought to a close one of the most enjoyable, instructive, and successful meetings the Yorkshire Division has ever held.

G. P. JACKSON, *Hon. Secretary.*

Annual Report, 1926.

The retiring Committee have pleasure in submitting for your approval the 20th Annual Report, for the year ending December, 1926.

Membership.—Commencing the year with a membership of 119, including 6 Honorary Fellows, 20 new members have been enrolled during the year, and 18 resignations were received, leaving the total membership at 121. A little progress with regard to membership must be considered satisfactory when all the difficulties connected with the Division are borne in mind.

Meetings.—During the past year meetings have been held as follows :

The Annual Meeting at Leeds, on January 27th. During the afternoon an address was given by Mrs. Councillor Blanch Leigh on the subject of "Sentiment." The Annual Business Meeting was held in the evening, after which a Social and Whist Drive was held.

The inaugural Meeting was held at Ilkley, on March 24th. In the afternoon a discussion was opened by Miss Wragg, entitled "Education of our Assistants"; after tea the discussion was resumed.

The next meeting was held at Bolling Hall, Bradford, on June 23rd. In the unavoidable absence of Mr. E. C. Wickens, who was to have given an address Mr. W. E. Preston gave a talk on the collection of Local Maps, Plans, Deeds, etc., in the Bradford Public Libraries and Museums. After tea members were conducted round the Hall under the guidance of Mr. H. J. M. Maltby.

The final meeting of the year took place at Halifax on October 13th. During the afternoon members were addressed by Bishop Frodsham, and conducted round the Parish Church by Mr. T. W. Hanson. The evening session was opened by Mr. T. W. Muskett with an address entitled "Wanted—a Library Policy," an address which provoked a very hearty discussion.

Officers and Committee: Mr. G. W. Strother (Leeds) terminated another year as President of the Division. Your Committee wish to place on record their high appreciation of the services rendered by him during his tenure of office.

Finance.—Your Honorary Treasurer submits his Annual Financial Statement for your approval. Briefly the income was £38 6s. 5½d., and the expenditure £28 0s. 8d., leaving a balance in hand of £10 5s. 9½d. This very satisfactory state of affairs bears testimony to the faithful discharge of duties by your worthy Honorary Treasurer.

Personal.—Your Committee have been fortunate in securing a grant of 10s. a week from the A.A.L. Benevolent Fund. This allowance has been made for the past nine months to Mr. S. M. Bryant (York) who has been in a sanatorium throughout the past year. Your Committee had pleasure in making a Christmas gift to Mr. Bryant, who has written several times to thank the members of the Division for their consideration.

Acknowledgments.—On behalf of the Division, the Committee desire to express their sincere thanks to the librarians, civic authorities, speakers, and all members who, by their regular attendance and loyal co-operation, have helped to make the past year successful.

G. P. JACKSON, *Hon. Secretary.*

NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

The third meeting of the session was held at the Blackburn Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery on Wednesday, February 9th.

Over forty members and friends were present to inspect the recently re-organised library under the guidance of Mr. R. Ashton, Chief Librarian, and his staff. The lending library has been re-organised in every sense of the word, and those who knew the place under the old system could hardly recognise it. A children's Lending Department has been added, and the whole aspect of the library is light, airy, and pleasant; the arrangements, fittings, and decoration having been admirably carried out.

Tea was very kindly provided at the Criterion Café, by the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery Committee.

Following tea a meeting was held in the Committee Room of the Education Offices, the President (H. Fostall, Esq.), in the chair.

Dr. Greeves, Vice-Chairman of the Library Committee welcomed the Association, and apologised for the absence through illness of the Chairman (R. J. Howard, Esq.). Dr. Greeves referred to the huge success of the re-organised library. School teachers, he said, were often given credit, and justly so, for the training of children, but in his opinion, librarians probably deserved greater credit for cultivating the child's taste in good reading on leaving school. Librarians were playing a very vital part in the education of the community. He found in his profession that patients who could be provided with books were the most happy and contented, and did not blame the doctor for their slow recovery!

Mr. R. Ashton, F.L.A., Chief Librarian and Curator, Blackburn, gave a short talk on the recent re-organisation of the Lending Library. The Blackburn Library was built in 1872, and the present lending library erected as a store in 1892. Whilst the building lacked the features of a modern public library, it was found to be structurally sound. Mr. Ashton went on to explain the various methods adopted and the principles kept in mind in organising an up-to-date open-access library. Neatness, tidiness, cleanliness, simplicity of arrangement to ease the task of the borrower, were some of the things they aimed at under their new system. They wanted the public to understand that the Library was their own institution, and a very live one. Red tape was avoided and citizens of all classes were encouraged to use the library in every possible way. "Brotherhood and Service" was their motto.

It was particularly gratifying to hear Mr. Ashton pay unstinted tribute to the loyalty and efficiency of his staff, and to attribute it to a large measure of the library's success.

Mr. Hindle, Deputy Librarian, mentioned that since the library was re-organised eighteen months ago half a million volumes had been issued and not a single book lost sight of. In fact books that had been loaned out ten years ago and lost sight of under the old indicator system, were now being returned. Truly a tribute to Blackburn's remarkable honesty!

Mr. Ashton and his staff were heartily congratulated on the "turn over" by subsequent speakers, Messrs. Fostall, Fry, Hamer, Jast and Pomfret.

Hearty votes of thanks were passed on the motion of the President, seconded by Mr. H. Hamer.

The next meeting of the Division will be held at Wallasey on Wednesday, April 6th, 1927. The party will meet on the Liverpool Landing stage to catch the 2.30 ferry boat to Seacombe, and thence proceed to inspect the Wallasey Gas Works (by kind permission of J. H. Crowther, Esq., Gas and Water Engineer, Wallasey).

Tea will be provided at the Earlstun Library Wallasey, by kind invitation of the Wallasey Libraries staff.

After tea a meeting will be held in the Earlstun Library (by kind permission

of W. Wilson, Esq., F.L.A., Chief Librarian, Wallasey). Papers: "Qualifications in Relation to Registration and Specialisation," by R. W. Lynn, Esq., M.L.A., Deputy Librarian, Wallasey; "Can the 'Library Assistant' be improved?" ; a short note, by W. G. Fry, Esq., F.L.A., Manchester Public Libraries.

Will members and friends intending to be present kindly notify me not later than the first post on Monday, April 4th?

REGINALD HOWARTH, *Hon. Secretary.*

NEW MEMBERS.

Fellows: George E. L. Denne (Borough Librarian, Ilford).

Members: Marion Moore (Derby), Clare Lawrence Wright (Leicester), Mildred E. Bailey, William Chamberlain, Irene B. Clothier, Beatrice Farmer, Vera Else Pegrum, Marjorie Joyce Ormrod (Ilford), Haynes Bath (Croydon), H. Carwood (Stepney).

Associates: Ida Kennedy, Phyllis I. Jeffkins, Joan Nettleton (Ilford).

APPOINTMENTS.

•HOPE, Cecil, of Sunderland Public Libraries, to be Branch Librarian, Leeds.

•JACKSON, G. P. Senior Assistant (Reference Department), Bradford, to be Senior Assistant, Leeds.

• Members of the A.A.L.

Correction.—Under particulars of the Paddington Appointment last month it was stated that a Mr. Eames of Willesden had been one of the selected. The name should have been, Mr. E. Tozer of Willesden.

When delivering our town's Remit . .

*Writing (13/1/27) to Foyle's Libraries Dept.,
a Public Librarian in New Zealand says:*

"May I mention in conclusion that the Annual Meeting
"of the Librarians of the Dominion of New Zealand will
"be held at the City of Wanganni, on February 9th and 10th.
"I shall be one of the two . . . delegates . . . and
"when delivering our town's Remit, I shall certainly take the
"opportunity of making special mention of your firm to my
"fellow librarians, laying stress on your talent in digging
"out rare books by half forgotten authors."

*May we be favoured with your Lists and
Replacements?*

FOYLES LIBRARIES DEPT.,

Manette Street, Charing Cross Road,
London, W.1.